

Kentucky Teacher™

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No Boundaries

Virtual teams share ideas and solutions 'anytime, anywhere' online

By Faun S. Fishback

Kentucky Department of Education

Educators who work with the Wilderness Trail Special Education Cooperative always have time for sharing, planning and collaborating. "Anytime, anywhere" are the watchwords of their work.

As members of the cooperative's virtual team cadre, they can collaborate on special education work from concept to completion, debate and discuss issues within their workgroup, and access information from home, the office or any location via an Internet connection. This virtual team uses course tools and a private workspace offered by the Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS). Team members can communicate, share information and discuss best practices anytime – not just during regularly scheduled meetings.

The Wilderness Trail cooperative serves 16 school districts, extending from Estill County south to Clinton County. Special education directors in member districts and their critical partners – the Department of Special Education at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), Berea Early Childhood Regional Training Center and the Department of Education Regional Service Center 6 – have been a virtual team for two years.

While "virtual teaming" is a common practice for business and industry, it's a newer concept in education. Cooperative members may be the first special education cooperative in the country working as a virtual team, says Bob Fortney, senior consultant in the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Virtual Learning.

Virtual teaming is applicable to any group of educators who share the same goals or missions, live or work in different locations, and want

to share information and documents without traveling to meetings, Fortney said. The KVHS course tools require little training before team members can accomplish important collaborative tasks:

- share documents
- post Web sites as "hot links" on a Webligraphy (a list of Internet sites related to a specific topic)
- access e-mail from within the course and create e-mail distribution lists
- make entries in an online journal

nized the course but is quick to point out that it is interactive. Team members can post information to the course, ask questions, give answers and read all the responses through threaded discussions in the team chatroom. All participants have opportunities to participate in online decision making.

"The virtual teaming has helped us build better relationships and share our ideas," Cundiff said. "It's all about access to the most current information and using it to have a

site allows us to gain access to the latest professional documents and, in turn, share that information with future teachers in our college classrooms," he added.

"When I need help with anything, the first place I check is the virtual team," said Belinda Bowling, special education director of Berea Independent Schools. "The virtual team is right up there with the special education co-op as the most helpful and supportive sources for doing my job well."

The Kentucky Department of Education began using the virtual teaming course with employees, highly skilled educators and regional service center consultants who participated last summer in training for providing direct services to districts and schools. The course keeps the 300 employees working on service issues without interrupting their other work with formal meetings.

Cundiff and Fortney also see virtual teaming as a valuable tool for educators who work across districts, regions or the state in content areas, grade levels or special interest groups. "There are all kinds of ways virtual teaming can be used to help educators, administrators and families," Cundiff said. "It's a great opportunity for people to share information!"

For more information on the KVHS virtual teaming course tools, contact Bob Fortney toll free at (866) 432-0008 or by e-mail at bfortney@kde.state.ky.us. To find out more about the Wilderness Trail Special Education Cooperative's virtual teaming experience, contact Connie Cundiff at (606) 787-2488 or ccundiff@madison.k12.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

It All Adds Up!

First-year primary students Makoto Horie and Mariana Arce use play money to practice counting in teacher Debbie Dickerson's English as a Second Language class at Morningside Elementary in the Elizabethtown Independent district.

- analyze and review issues and hot topics of mutual interest over time in threaded discussions
- ask and answer questions in a "real time" chat room.

Connie Cundiff, director of the Wilderness Trail Special Education Cooperative, serves as technical advisor for the virtual team. She orga-

nized the course but is quick to point out that it is interactive. Team members can post information to the course, ask questions, give answers and read all the responses through threaded discussions in the team chatroom. All participants have opportunities to participate in online decision making.

EKU's Department of Special Education faculty is benefiting from the collaboration just as districts can benefit from access to faculty members who specialize in different disability areas, said assistant EKU professor Justin T. Cooper. "The virtual

The challenge now is to move forward

By Gene Wilhoit
Commissioner of Education

Even in these tough economic times, the 2003 General Assembly announced that it would not cut funding to public P-12 schools. Legislators made education a priority.

The General Assembly took steps that support schools and districts for now. However, their actions mean that Kentucky will enter the next legislative session with monumental challenges and millions of dollars in unanswered questions about public schools.

In this time of fiscal uncertainty, where did the legislators find money to send to schools in the next fiscal year?

- \$21 million from funds earmarked for next year's textbook purchases – That means elementary and middle schools that want to replace their six-year-old mathematics materials in fiscal 2003-04 will have to wait or use funding from other sources.

- \$22 million from the school rewards fund – This was money promised to schools that meet or surpass their performance goals.

- \$4 million from the Department of Education's regional service centers – All eight centers, the first line of support to schools striving to excel, will close by July 1. The center's eight directors, 77 teachers and 10 support staff – school reform's "first responders" – will no longer be available to provide direct assistance.

The legislature will divide these and other funds among the 176 school districts over the next two fiscal years, based on the state's school funding formula. Certainly districts will welcome the additional \$12.7 million in 2003-04 to alleviate shortfalls. The \$78 million they will receive in 2004-05 was generated

from one-time money or by eliminating or postponing programs.

Overall, Kentucky schools are on the brink of major improvements. During the 2000-02 accountability cycle, six schools passed the proficiency goal set for the year 2014. However, 90 schools scored low enough to qualify for state assistance. The 30 lowest-performing schools received scholastic audits, and many among the other 60 requested scholastic reviews. All of those schools now know exactly what they must do to improve, and all are eager to move forward. For all schools and districts, threats of lost or declining funding couldn't have come at a worse time. In fact, if those areas of delayed or eliminated funding are not restored in some way – and soon – we'll see significant backsliding that could erode the progress of every school.

I visit many Kentucky schools, and I like what I see: the dedication of educators and staff; the professionalism of teachers; the awareness of students as individuals; the continuing adjustments to meet each student's needs; the significant and continuing involvement of parents, business leaders and others in our communities.

Improvement's momentum is real. The gains we've made are too important, too precious, to put aside.

We must all continue to appeal to Kentucky's legislators: Do whatever it takes to fuel that momentum. Maintain and build on Kentucky's landmark accountability system, developed by Kentuckians for Kentuckians; the product of a careful process mandated by the General Assembly and closely monitored by a panel of national experts named by the Leg-

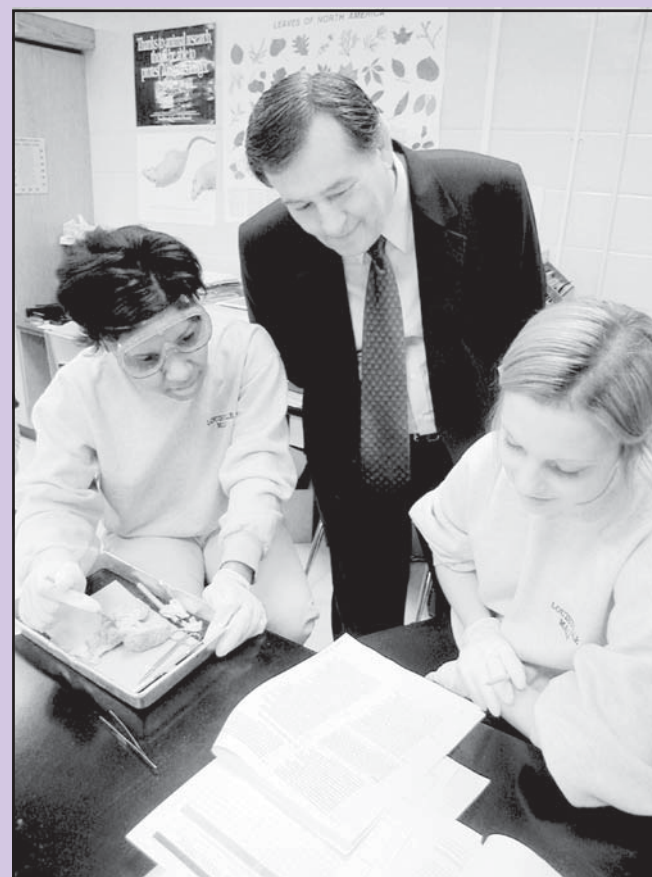


Photo by Rick McComb

Sade Jackson (left) and Ashley Robbins dissected a sheep brain as Commissioner of Education Gene Wilhoit observed during a visit to Male High School in Jefferson County. Wilhoit visited eight high schools this spring to talk with educators, staff and students about the schools' successes and challenges.

islative Research Commission to ensure validity and reliability. Any move to diminish accountability now, three-fourths of the way between the start of reform and the goal, ignores progress already made and undermines the promise of progress in the future.

All of us must keep alive the founding philosophy of our new system of public education: that every Kentucky child needs and deserves a first-rate education. Kentucky educators tell me they welcome the opportunity to be held accountable for the academic progress of each and every child. If we deny this accountability now, we stand to lose the public and corporate advocacy that has taken a decade to build.

It is time for the General Assembly – for all Kentuckians – to remember what Kentucky has promised and what Kentucky has achieved in public education. Our progress has not been accidental. It is the logical and

intentional result of an innovative system developed through a trustworthy process involving thousands of people with high stakes in the ultimate product: the opportunity for every Kentucky student to graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary for future success.

I have confidence the General Assembly will stand tall and stand fast in support of excellence in public education – to honor its commitment to Kentucky, Kentucky's principles and Kentucky's children. I call on all Kentuckians to support our legislators as they make tough but vital decisions about Kentucky's schools and Kentucky's future.

We have come too far to turn back now.

To respond to the commissioner on this topic, phone him at (502) 564-3141 or send e-mail to gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us.



EDUCATORS REVIEW BOOKS AND JOURNALS ABOUT THE PROFESSION

Buzz and Ollie's Adventures Series

By Donna Sloan Thorne and Marilyn Sloan Felts

Hardcover: 36 pages each; Sloan Publishing, September 2002.

Buzz and Ollie's High, Low Adventure (ISBN 0972414703)

Buzz and Ollie's Loud, Soft Adventure (ISBN 0972414711)

Buzz and Ollie's Steady Beat Adventure (ISBN 097241472X)

Six Christian County elementary school teachers submitted reviews of this series written by sisters Marilyn Sloan Felts and Donna Sloan Thorne. Felts teaches music at Crofton and Holiday elementary schools in Christian County. Thorne teaches private piano lessons in Tennessee. Following are excerpts from the six reviews.

The "Buzz and Ollie" books take children on adventures that teach music concepts and friendship as well. The musical Sloan sisters are creative storywriters!

*Submitted by Jane Perry,
Librarian*

I am amazed how teachers Thorne and Felts used natural events and everyday objects to enrich young readers' knowledge concerning elements of music. The "Steady Beat Adventure" can help increase students' knowledge about the arts (Kentucky Academic Expectations 1.2, 1.13, and 2.23). Also, the book's text can be a tool for teaching poetry and how poetry can be used to write a story.

*Cynthia S. Ellis,
Intermediate Teacher*

The "Buzz and Ollie" books are adventure stories that teach many of the science, language arts, music and listening skills taught at the primary level. The story line is easy to understand and encourages young children to compare their own adventures to those in the story.

*Cynthia Grant Cook,
Primary Teacher*

In a music class, these books may be invaluable in teaching musical concepts, but they are also good tools for the regular classroom and for home reading. As books for fun, the stories are sure to delight boys and girls alike.

*Mildred Mabry,
Primary Teacher*

I used "Loud, Soft Adventure" as part of a unit on animals and hibernation. This book would also be an excellent teaching resource to use in teaching about families.

*Shirley Ballard,
Primary Teacher*

I use these books to introduce the science lesson on sound (elementary science core content 1.2.4). The stories peak the students' interest and help me evaluate prior knowledge so I know where to begin instruction. These books are an additional resource for reading:

X.O.1 – Use context to determine word meaning. (As we read aloud, we discuss an unfamiliar word such as "metronome" and try to determine what it means.)

2.0.8 – Identify and explain the main idea and specific details. (Students can "act out" the story or draw pictures in cartoon fashion to show sequencing.)

1.0.9 – Explain a character's actions based on the passage. (Students choose a character and either write or perform why a certain character reacts to a specific part in the book.)

1.0.1.0 – Connect literature to real life. (Students can write a personal narrative or a creative piece about a similar experience of their own.)

Diane McGuire, Grade 4 Teacher



If You Don't Feed the Teachers, They Eat the Students: Guide to Success for Administrators and Teachers

By Neila A. Connors

Paperback, 143 pages; Incentive Publications, March 2000; ISBN 0865304572

Neila Connors cheers incessantly for support of teachers. "Acronyms Are Us" could have been an equally engaging title, because the author has a plethora of acronyms to define lofty but desirable traits for the perfect school administrator. My favorite is S.A.N.E., which stands for "self-disciplined and nurturing enthusiast." D.U.C.K.S., on the other hand, stands for "dependent upon criticizing and killing success." These are the people who hang out in the teachers' lounge and undermine new initiatives. At the top of the "desirables" list are the E.A.G.L.E.S., "educators affecting growth and learning for every student."

The rapid-fire acronyms and lists of traits seemed silly before I was too far into the book, but I can't disagree with the sentiments behind them. Communication with the staff is critical for the perfect administrator, and finding vast and varied ways to communicate appreciation to the faculty appears to be the author's area of expertise. She offers no less than 150 ways administrators can serve fat-free D.E.S.S.E.R.T.S., "defining experiences structured to support, encourage and reward teachers' spirit." A few of the tasty tidbits:

- Spruce up and maintain a pleasing teachers' lounge.
- Name areas of the school after members of the school staff.
- Plan a staff field trip.
- Maintain a pat-on-the-back bulletin board.
- Reward risk takers with a "badge of courage."

If you can stand the saccharin, you (or your administrator) can get a lot of good ideas for encouraging the staff at your school.

*Linda Satterlee-McFadin,
Teacher, Western Middle School
(Jefferson County)*

Graves County teachers team up to improve teaching and learning

By Paul Schaumburg
Public Relations Director
Graves County Schools

The business world has long used the team approach to achieve continuous quality improvement. Now the team concept is reaping benefits in Graves County schools.

Starting last summer, with funding from the local school board and a Kentucky Educational Leadership Consortium demonstration grant, a team of 19 teachers and nine administrators began studying leadership principles and sharpening their own leadership skills. The teacher members were selected for the team through applications and interviews, and each receives a stipend for working on the team.

Team training began with a two-day seminar. In subsequent monthly meetings, team members read and discussed leadership books and talked about ways to lead the district's teachers and staff in improving instruction. Their mission: to set up an effective system for modeling, coaching, mentoring, training and encouraging other teachers – and students – to become instructional leaders in their schools and classrooms.

Elementary instructional supervisor Janice Kendall said the team is already putting its leadership ideas into action. "The team is leading all the district's teachers in curriculum alignment in five special afternoons throughout the school year," she said. "Team members have taken ownership of this project. When they work with other teachers, the projects like curriculum alignment aren't seen as just something the central office has created. Instead, our leader-teachers have a stake in

it because they helped create it. They're doing a good job of getting their fellow teachers to 'buy into' the project, too."

Superintendent Brady Link, a team member himself, said he likes what is happening with curriculum alignment and recognizes that some important long-term benefits will result from the team's work.

"At the most basic level, we're blurring the lines between teacher and administrator when we work together to answer the question 'What is good teaching?' and all the other questions that come from that most important core question," he said. "I think when you give teachers a voice in working together to achieve our most important goal, good things are bound to result."

Link anticipates that the leadership team's overall influence on the district and its work with curriculum alignment will show up in tangible results on state test scores "because we're focusing on the essential aspects of what we're doing and why those things are important."

As a Kentucky Educational Leadership Consortium leadership team demonstration site, the Graves County district will monitor the effectiveness of its team approach and share its findings with other districts.

To learn more about the work of Graves County's leadership team, contact secondary instructional supervisor Tommy Scott at (270)674-1545 or tscott@graves.k12.ky.us or elementary instructional supervisor Janice Kendall at (270)674-1546 or jkendall@graves.k12.ky.us.

KDE Web site features new 'QuickLinks' option

Soon after the Kentucky Department of Education's revamped Web site "went live" in January, many people familiar with the former site asked, "Where did the drop-down menu go?"

The dropdown menu was a lengthy list of links to various programs, offices and education topics. So many people missed it that the department responded recently by adding a new navigation feature to the new site: KDE QuickLinks. This new tool, available at the top of every page on the department's Web site (www.kentuckyschools.org), lists more than 130 frequently visited pages, providing "click-and-go" access to much of the information on the site.

Why did the drop-down menu disappear in the first place? Webmaster Armando Arrastia responds: "First, people with visual disabilities had trouble using the menu, and we wanted the site to be fully accessible to everyone. Second, the menu did not meet the specific standards for state agency Web sites. For those reasons, we removed the drop-down menu and replaced it with a new search function, which allows far more flexibility and functionality than either the drop-down menu or the old search engine. The addition of KDE QuickLinks makes the site easier to navigate."

While KDE QuickLinks is a fast way to locate information, Arrastia encourages site visitors to use the keyword/search box as well. "The new search engine will lead to a wealth of content, much of it found deep within the Web site," he said.

For more information about searching the site, click on Search Tips at the top of every Web page. To contact Arrastia, phone (502) 564-3421 or send e-mail to aarrasti@kde.state.ky.us.



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'Lead teachers' guide educators and students to higher levels of achievement

By Paul Upchurch
Superintendent
Elizabethtown Independent Schools

The Elizabethtown Independent School District has a new "game plan" to guide students to high levels of achievement. The plan starts with a commitment that every student will leave elementary school reading and writing at the proficient level. It involves teachers taking leadership roles in living up to that commitment.

Through a collaborative effort that includes faculty, staff, administrators and the Elizabethtown Board of Education, Morningside and Helmwood Heights elementary schools have joined efforts for a literacy initiative called the Lead Teacher Program. Each school has four "lead teachers" who receive training, opportunities to collaborate with teachers in another district (in this case, Centerfield Elementary in Oldham County) and a charge to take a leadership role within their own schools.

These lead teachers meet regularly with four to seven of their fellow teachers to relay what they learn through training and observation; to discuss student work; and to study proven, research-based instructional practices that help students achieve at high levels by improving their reading and writing skills.

Principals Nelson Kelley of Morningside Elementary and Kelly Graham of Helmwood Heights Elementary refer to the lead teachers as in-house instructional coaches. "Through this plan, our own excellent teachers provide ongoing training and support in our schools," Kelley said. "Too often, teachers are asked to leave their classrooms and change jobs within the district to provide this level of leadership. We are developing our own in-house professional development leaders while supporting their desire to do what they do best: teach."



Photo by Rick McComb

Fifth-grade teachers (left to right) Stephanie Buckner, Jessica Hundley and Kelli Bush compare notes about writing assignments at Morningside Elementary. Bush is one of the Elizabethtown district's "lead teachers" trained as instructional coaches. The district started the Lead Teacher Program this year with a focus on writing, and teachers say they already see tremendous growth in their students as writers.

The district began the Lead Teacher Program at the start of the current school year. The focus during the program's first two years is to train each elementary teacher in instructional techniques that teach writing strategies to every student.

Last summer's Elizabethtown Writing Project set the foundation to establish a "writing culture" in every classroom. The lead teachers emphasize that the elementary classroom must have a strong daily emphasis on children's literature – reading that exposes students to new vocabulary and communication strategies that they may use in their own writing.

The district's elementary schools have self-contained classrooms with daily language workshops in a print-rich language environment. Every elementary class-

room has a language arts block of time (90-120 minutes per day) for language development. This workshop setting allows teachers the time to have regular tutorial conferences with their students in reading and writing.

Teachers are witnessing tremendous growth in their students as writers. "Our students are communicating through writing at a level I have not seen before," says Helmwood Heights lead teacher Robin Kerckhove. "In addition, they are excited about learning and sharing their thoughts through writing. We are finding that, given the opportunity and the proper guidance, students can accomplish far more than we imagined. They actually begin to view the world through the eyes of a writer. Not only does this help them grow as communicators, but students

in this setting develop a deep passion for learning in general."

All elementary students keep writers' notebooks and use them daily to record ideas, draft pieces of writing or practice writing strategies they are learning.

"It is exciting to see our students use metaphors, similes and personification and other strategies in their writing," says Carl Stoltzfus, the district's assistant superintendent for elementary education. "In addition, they are learning to express themselves in ways that convey what they experience with the five senses. Many of our young writers are growing daily in their use of vocabulary as they express different moods and feelings to their readers."

Staff members throughout the district are finding that this daily writing prepares the students for developing formal writing portfolios. It provides the tools to communicate what they are learning in other disciplines such as science, social studies, mathematics and the arts. Building writers in this way equips students with the skills that are necessary to communicate across subject areas and genres to any audience.

Teachers and administrators understand and support the idea that everyone in the district must constantly work to improve their daily instructional practices. Educators throughout the district believe that the collaboration among teachers through the Lead Teacher Program will have a positive effect on student achievement.

For more information about Elizabethtown's Lead Teacher Program and emphasis on reading and writing at the elementary level, visit www.etown.k12.ky.us on the Web or contact Assistant Superintendent Carl Stoltzfus at cstoltzf@etown.k12.ky.us or (270) 765-6146.

What does a Kentucky preschool resource classroom look like? Take this ‘virtual visit’

By Annie Rooney French
Kentucky Department of Education

All around the state, Kentucky has exemplary classrooms that have scored an average of 6 out of 7 possible points on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Score. These are Kentucky’s Preschool Resource Classrooms. The teachers in these classrooms have done an outstanding job of creating a learning environment for preschool children.

What makes each of these classrooms exceptional? The following composite description combines features from several resource classrooms to “create” an ideal preschool environment.

First, the classroom is **exciting!** Learning centers invite exploration and excite the senses. The teacher is often sitting in a chair, talking with children at their eye level. There is a soft buzz of children talking, using materials and moving around the room in an excited but controlled manner.

The classroom has been **designed for learning.** Materials for the day’s special activity are on top of a shelf or on the table. The teacher helps reluctant children get started playing with the materials and with cooperative play. Other materials stored on the shelves remind the children of previous learning activities. The shelves are neatly organized, with objects identified by signs. Some words are printed in various languages such as Spanish and Chinese to reflect the children’s cultures and to help the children understand the multicultural world around them. Each of the centers is unique and yet fits into the total picture of the classroom.

Learning Centers

The **book corner** has colorful, interactive books. A serape from Mexico is stretched over the chair. The reading area is neatly arranged with a rug and large pillows. Large stuffed fish and other sea creatures provide soft furnishings for cuddling. Standing by is a white magnetic board with a tub of magnetic

letters and a flannel board with flannel pieces of an underwater scene complete with divers and a shipwreck.

There is a **puppet theater** nearby, created from a large appliance box now brightly painted and decorated with curtains. The selection of multicultural puppets is displayed on a rack next to the theater.

A **writing area** holds paper, pencils, crayons, sandpaper letters, envelopes, stickers, stamps, pictures, photographs and watercolor paints. The children are busy creating notes and cards for friends and family.

The **science table** features a variety of natural items, including an aquarium and shells. Today’s special science activity is “sink and float,” with an accompanying experience chart on which the children mark their predictions and then record whether an item sinks or floats when placed in water. Natural items

brought to school by the teachers and the children are located on a tray. A round, lighted magnifying glass on a movable arm helps the children see these items up close. Shelves display a selection of magnets, measuring tools, colored plastic squares, sealed canisters that make a variety of sounds when shaken, smelling jars, plastic critters and a variety of books on the ocean and other themes. This area is often crowded with children waiting their turn to experiment, explore and discover.

The **housekeeping center** has recently been turned into a Mexican kitchen. A piñata hangs from the ceiling, and there’s a tortilla maker and a wooden mixer for making hot chocolate. “Play” foods include plastic tortillas, burritos and rice with beans. On the shelves are additional materials, including a wok and chopsticks left over from a China learning theme. African clothing is always

present, as are child-sized crutches. This center, like all the others, includes pictures of children representing various cultures as well as photographs of the children in this class using items and clothing of various cultures. Books show a variety of work and home themes. Pictures and books show babies growing up, daddies as fathers, women as professionals, people with disabilities and a variety of multicultural workers. This center also has a selection of work-related props, such as a doctor’s bag and white coat.

The **music center** is on the other side of the room from the cozy, quiet areas. When children are planning their play activities, the large, electric piano on center’s floor is inevitably the first choice of several students. The music center contains the traditional preschool instruments (triangle, sand blocks, tambourine and such) plus some leftovers from

other units, including an African thumb harp and a Chinese gong. More recent additions in this center are Hispanic instruments, including maracas and a guiro (a gourd with carved ridges that produce a raspy rhythmic sound when scraped). The children created the maracas during small-group time last week. During “choice time,” when children may select from many activities, several children decide to form a band and march around the room, delighting in their ability to create music together.

A small, brightly decorated house in the corner is set up as a **quiet area**. One or two children can listen to tapes, read or play with a small toy in this area, undisturbed by the others. The children often come here to have some time alone or to play or read quietly with each other. Sometimes the teacher comes into this area to read with a child. There are always books and stuffed animals here, but sometimes there are other activities, too, such as a handheld game or a magnetic board with letters.

The **manipulative area** includes puzzles, small-muscle toys and games, as well as mathematics materials for measuring, weighing and classifying. A bar graph recently completed by the children and their teacher is posted on the wall.

An **art area** near a sink offers a selection of collage materials for use during choice time. At the sensory table, the teacher introduces the materials and tools the children can use to explore the day’s theme.

Beyond Learning Centers

The essential element in the preschool resource classrooms is the interaction between teachers and the children and their families. When the children arrive each day and parents and other family members visit, teachers greet them individually by name. If the family speaks a language other than English at home, the

teachers say “Hello” and “How are you?” in the family’s home language.

The parents come into the room and talk with the teacher and sometimes play with their children. The room is set up for parent involvement, with signs in every learning center suggesting parent-child activities and conversation starters.

Over time, teachers and parents forge relationships and mutual trust. The teachers have warm personalities that help them feel comfortable talking with families, and through training they have learned how to enhance teacher-family relationships. Over time and with additional education, these teachers have learned to improve their interactions with the children so that they now ask open-ended questions: “What do you think will happen next?”; “We’re going to visit a farm next week. What do you think we will see?”; “Do you think the plastic car will sink or float? Why?” The quality of these interactions helps improve children’s thinking skills, which will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

The teachers elicit responses that encourage preschool children to use their language skills as well as thinking skills. As a result, the children learn to practice thoughtfulness. In classrooms that practice the High Scope, Plan-Do-Review process, children have learned to plan their actions and do their plan. One group, for example, prepared to construct a building in the block corner. After discussing their plan, they emerged chanting “Can we build it? Yes, we can.” That can-do attitude is a powerful way to build confidence in children. A parent visiting the class remarked how pleasing it was to hear her son say he was the smartest kid in the whole wide world. After hearing their teachers say they are competent and smart, the children adopt an attitude of confidence.

The teachers are creative with ideas. One teacher has adapted the “Duck, Duck, Goose” game to use any two words. The children may be heard saying numbers, “one, one, two,” “cat, cat, monkey” and even words from other languages, “nueve, nueve, diez.” Now when the children play this game, they listen carefully for the second word and are often laughing with delight at the choice.

These classes are more than just exciting places to learn. They also are places where laughter is heard, problems are solved, and children learn to use their minds well and develop social and emotional skills.

For a list of preschool resource classrooms, visit the Kentucky Department of Education’s Web site (www.kentuckyschools.org) and click “Instructional Resources,” then “Preschool.”



Photo by Rick McComb



Photo by Rick McComb

Austin Meitzler stacks spools and plays with toys of various shapes and sizes at Rodburn Elementary School in Rowan County. The activity helps Austin and his classmates develop fine-motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Annie Rooney French is a consultant in the Kentucky Department of Education’s Early Childhood Branch. To contact her, phone (502) 564-7056 or send e-mail to afrench@kde.state.ky.us.

Harlan County schools put the *human* in humanities and the *story* in history

By Jeff Phillips
Harlan County Public Schools

"If I had my life to live over again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once a week; for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use."

Charles Darwin

Are we art smart in Harlan County Schools?

Ask Harlan County Arts and Humanities Resource Teacher Jeanne Ann Lee, and you'll get a response filled with enthusiasm and excitement.

"I really think we have made lunar strides in the delivery of arts and humanities instruction," said Lee, now in her second year as a leader in revamping the district's arts and humanities program.

"I believe this is due to the knowledge base and high-quality teachers who are motivated and excited about teaching arts and humanities," she said. "At the same time, I believe we have eons to go before we begin to grasp the impact arts education can make in the life of one child."

Lee said teachers on the district's arts faculty have spent "countless hours" analyzing data related to arts and humanities test scores. "We found a significant gap between the arts and humanities scores of males and females. Boys tend to score novice on a ratio of 10 to 1 compared to girls. The challenge in closing this gap is to overcome the prevailing stereotype that 'the arts are for sissies.' The challenge is even greater for our county and region, because our children and the adults in their lives often have limited exposure to the arts."

Lee is working with all schools in the district to boost student performance in arts and humanities. This year's focus is on training and materials related to dance. Mary Ann McAdam, a professor of dance at

Eastern Kentucky University who works with the ECU Arts Collaborative, visited the Harlan County district recently to share with teachers the history of dance and its role in society.

"We've emphasized to teachers that dance – as well as the other art forms – should not only be taught

tional Television to give teachers access to teaching materials developed by KET. The district has also taken advantage of KET's professional development seminars. Numerous other resources have been provided, including curriculum, instruments, instructional videos, professional development and a subscription to

present monologues based on history.

ArtShop – The district's arts educators come together monthly to discuss important issues, current teaching practices and grant opportunities. The discussions sometimes include guest presenters.

Arts Collaborative – The Harlan County Board of Education approved the district's membership in the Eastern Kentucky University Southeast Kentucky Arts Collaborative. This collaborative, the only one of its kind in the nation, is a joint effort between ECU and school districts throughout Kentucky to pool resources to provide arts opportunities for students. Membership fees from participating districts pay for a director who coordinates with the artists and schools and secures block booking and reduced rates for performances and workshops aligned with core content.

Harlan County educators believe that learning about and through the arts is the best way to connect to cultures and time periods of the past, present and future. Learning experiences in the arts provide opportunities for students to be "smart" in creative ways and develop problem-solving and community-building skills essential to life in the 21st century.



Photo Courtesy Harlan County Schools

Evarts High School student Stephanie White examines a Richard Jolley glass totum during her humanities class visit to the Knoxville Arts Museum.

for its own sake, but used as a tool for students who might not be able to express their ideas otherwise," Lee said. "Dance is important for students who are capable of expressing their ideas through traditional ways but find it more rewarding, more challenging, more fun to express their ideas through this kinesthetic form."

The district has introduced or provided a number of arts and humanities resources and opportunities related to dance and the other performing and visual arts:

Resource Materials – The district has worked with Kentucky Educa-

tion Music Express magazine for each K-8 facility.

African Dance Team Visit – The district joined forces with the ECU Arts Collaborative to make it possible for the dance troupe Biokoto from Ghana West Africa to visit the region on March 7.

Arts Showcase – As part of an arts education showcase planned for May, ECU students will come to the district to collaborate with local students in dance. Harlan County students will perform some of the dances they learn at this event and also perform on dulcimers and harmonicas, display their visual art and

For more information about the district's approach to arts and humanities education, contact resource teacher Jeanne Ann Lee by e-mail through the KETS global list (or jlee@harlan.k12.ky.us) or phone (606) 573-4330, extension 2020.

Jeff Phillips is the public relations/communications director for Harlan County Public Schools and past president of the Kentucky School Public Relations Association.

News From KET

The Kentucky Network

Subscribe to e-News

Kentucky Educational Television offers Kentucky's P-12 schools a wide range of resources: instructional programs for students, professional development for teachers, online resources and materials, onsite workshops and more. KET now offers another service to help educators keep up with the many resources. Through Classroom e-News, educators can receive e-mail messages updating them on KET resources and opportunities.

More than 5,000 educators have already subscribed. Each month, they receive from one to three brief, customized messages geared toward their specific grade level and content area. A typical message includes a description of the resource, schedule information and links to related Internet sites.

Subscribe to KET Classroom e-News online at www.ket.org/education/newsletters.

Order 'Arts Toolkit in Drama'

KET is now taking orders for "Arts Toolkit in Drama," a new resource for teachers.

KET, in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Arts Council, the Kentucky Center, Stage One and other Kentucky arts organizations, produced this multimedia, Kentucky-specific resource to support the integration of drama into the core curriculum. Kentucky teachers field-tested prototypes of the toolkit and created lesson plans and other materials.

The toolkit includes four hours of video excerpts, two interactive CD-ROMs, a binder of lesson plans and other printed materials, and access to a utilization session. Educators attending Kentucky's arts academy this summer will receive the toolkit free of charge. Others may buy the kit at cost, \$89. Multiple-copy discounts are available.

For more information, send e-mail to artstoolkit@ket.org, call Teresa Day at (859) 259-7294, or visit the Arts Toolkit Web site at www.ket.org/artstoolkit.

KET plans to offer the Arts Toolkit in Dance later this year, with visual arts and music toolkits to come later.



Linking the Lake to Learning

John Williams, a fishery officer with Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, answers questions from students at Lincoln County Middle School. The school has linked instruction in most content areas to a new recreational lake in the area.

Photo by Rick McComb

New initiative supports women striving to be superintendents

The Badgett Regional Cooperative for Educational Enhancement, based in Madisonville, has created a three-state venture that offers a full year of support for women who want to become school district superintendents.

The Aspiring Women Superintendent's Initiative, partially funded by a Wallace-Reader's Digest Ventures in Leadership grant, will give 20 women from Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana an opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills in areas crucial to the office of superintendent. The University of Kentucky will serve as research partner as the participants are followed over a five-year period. This association ties the initiative to the Joint Center for the Study of the Superintendency, conducted by the University of Kentucky and the University of Minnesota.

The initiative will feature three three-day academies:

- In June, the Badgett Cooperative will host an academy featuring Mike Rutherford, a national presenter for Educators' Learning Network. "Requisites of a Leader," a nationally respected professional development program for educational leadership, will be the basis for this academy.
- This fall in Indianapolis, Indiana University will present an academy on gender issues and finance.
- In the spring of 2004 in Nashville, Tennessee will host sessions on various superintendency issues.

Participants will receive at least three graduate hours when they complete the three academies. Carolyn Ferrell, Badgett's executive director, reports that women who participate in this program will also receive added value to the degrees, certificates and experiences they already have and gain a valuable professional network spanning the three states.

A Web site with details and the application will be available beginning in April. Check the Badgett site at www.badgett.coop for a link. Applications and a fee of \$150 will be due by the end of April. A committee including current and retired women superintendents from the three participating states will select the program's 20 participants in May.

Information and applications are also available from Carolyn Ferrell or Pam McElhiney at Badgett. E-mail them through the KETS global list or phone (270) 821-4909. Their Internet e-mail addresses are cferrell@brcee.coop.k12.ky.us or pmcelhiney@brcee.coop.k12.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

Small World

Estes Elementary students Christopher Johnson, Terren Kinison and Molly Millay point out the location of the Netherlands to Wendy Link, the school's multi-media lab manager. To expose primary students to the world, Link piloted the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) project at the Owensboro Independent school last year. The nonprofit global network enables young people to use the Internet and other technologies for collaborative educational projects. Link was one of six U.S. educators who worked with a dozen educators from other countries to develop online learning resources for students and teachers around the world. For more about the network, visit www.earn.org on the Internet or contact Link by e-mail at wlink@owensboro.k12.ky.us.

Department to host summer camps for future educators

The Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Educator Recruitment and Retention, in partnership with Kentucky's public universities, will host Future Educators of America (FEA) camps this summer. These one-week camps, the first in Kentucky, will bring students to regional university campuses for training to become better students and prospective teachers. They will also learn about the benefits and opportunities of the education profession.

The division plans to invite students in Kentucky's FEA chapters to the first annual Kentucky FEA Conference scheduled for the fall.

The number of FEA chapters in Kentucky has increased by 53 percent during the 2002-03 school year as an increasing number of districts and schools take a "grow your own" strategy in the face of teacher shortages. According to Educator Recruitment and Retention director Lucian Yates, Kentucky leads the nation in the number of chartered FEA chapters. The division offers training, support and leadership with a goal of having a chartered FEA chapter in every Kentucky high school by 2007-08 and in every middle school by 2010-11.

For information about FEA or this summer's camps, or for assistance in starting an FEA chapter, contact Jennifer Miller at (502) 564-1479, Ext. 4726, or jmiller@kde.state.ky.us.

Scholarships available for aspiring counselors

To help schools and districts meet their needs for counseling services, the Kentucky Counseling Association offers scholarship assistance to college graduates who want to become counselors.

Interested persons can start this summer with tuition assistance and grants of up to \$100 for textbooks. Each of these participating colleges and universities will provide one tuition waiver: Eastern Kentucky, Lindsey Wilson, University of Louisville, Morehead State, Murray State, Western Kentucky and Xavier.

The application deadline is April 15. For more information and an application, visit the Kentucky Counseling Association Web site at www.kyca.org (select "KCA Summer 2003 Scholarship Application") or contact KCA Executive Director Bill Braden at (502) 223-5905.

Training available for new 'What Is Forestry?' units

Teachers may register by May 28 for training in the use of "What Is Forestry," a new six-unit curriculum designed for students in grades 3-12. The student-centered units cover science, social studies and some mathematics, with all units having connections to the arts.

This new series, designed by Kentucky teachers, natural resources professionals and education specialists, enrich the use of existing programs such as Project Learning Tree and Project Wild.

Four training sessions are scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. local time on the following dates:

- June 6 – Hardin County Extension Office, 201 Peterson Drive, Elizabethtown
- June 11 – Fayette County Extension Office, 1140 Red Mile Place, Lexington
- June 13 – University of Kentucky Research and Education Center, 1205 Hopkinsville St., Princeton
- June 24 – Natural Bridge State Park, Slade

Forestry specialist Marcella Szymanski and 4-H specialist Carol Hanley, both affiliated with the University of Kentucky, will conduct the training. Funds are available to pay for some substitute teachers (if school is still in session) and mileage costs for a limited number of participants.

The new curriculum is aligned with the Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools, Kentucky Core Content for Assessment, Kentucky Academic Expectations and National Science Education Standards. Training participants will receive copy of all six units plus other materials.

For details or registration, contact Marcella Szymanski at mszymans@uky.edu or (301) 765-3378.

Bulletin Board

By Joy Barr
Kentucky Department of Education

New sourcebook brings historical documents into classrooms

A new publication, "Our Documents Teacher Sourcebook," offers lesson plans and activities for incorporating 100 American historical documents into classroom curriculum. This is a free resource created by National History Day Inc., in cooperation with the National Archives. Materials include an annotated timeline, key themes, guidelines to primary sources and detailed lesson plans.

Request a free copy by sending e-mail to info@nationalhistoryday.org or calling (301) 314-9739.

Teachers needed to score National Board Certification entries

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards seeks teachers to help score candidate entries for national board certification. Teachers do not need to hold national certification to serve as assessors but must meet other requirements, including a bachelor's degree, a valid teaching license, a minimum of three years' teaching experience, and current employment at least half-time in the certificate area to be assessed.

For a complete list of requirements and an application to be an assessor, visit www.nbpts.org/candidates/become.cfm#roles on the Internet.

Environmental field trips available through Kentucky State Parks

R.E.A.C.H. (Recreation, Environment, and Cultural History) Education Camps provide opportunities to learn through nature and outdoor recreation activities. Aquatics, geology, state historical sites, plant identification activities and outdoor recreation supply teaching components and make learning fun for students.

Naturalists or recreation supervisors at Kentucky state resort parks are available to assist teachers. R.E.A.C.H. participation costs \$40 per person (student, teacher or chaperone). The cost covers a one-night stay at a park lodge, three meals and educational activities.

For more information, contact the Kentucky Department of Parks at (502) 564-3006 or visit www.kystateparks.com/events/reach.htm.

Kentucky School Laws now online

The Kentucky School Laws book is now available electronically on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site. From the KDE home page (www.kentuckyschools.org), enter "School Laws" in the keyword/search box and click "Search."

Printed copies are available for \$4 each from the KDE Bookstore. To order, go to the department's home page and click on Publications and Videos or phone (502) 564-3421.

Trainers to provide professional development for IGP

Seven cadre trainers are now available to provide professional development and consulting services to middle and high schools on the developing and implementing individual graduation plan (IGPs).

These independent consultants will also assist schools in implementing advisory programs and increasing parent involvement.

Region 1, 2 – Janice Lampkins, (270) 362-4977
Region 2, 3 – Patricia Marshall, (502) 254-5442
Region 4 – William Rick Shepman, (502) 845-4716
Region 5 – Pat Vencill, (859) 455-9897
Region 6 – Patricia Ann Miller, (859) 623-9390
Region 7 – Faye E. Barber, (606) 836-1204
Region 8 – Susan Raye Cyress, (606) 789-8644

School Health Institute scheduled for June 17-19 in Richmond

The eighth annual Coordinated School Health Institute is scheduled for June 17-19 on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University. This three-day professional development opportunity is focused on content and strategies that facilitate the development of a coordinated school health program and address the core content for assessment in practical living.

This year's themes are nutrition, inadequate physical activity and HIV/AIDS. School and district teams of two or more participants will have opportunities to write proposals for funding to address the risk behaviors related to the themes. A registration fee of \$150 covers dormitory lodging, meals and take-home resource materials.

A printable registration form is available at www.kyschoolhealth.org/cshinstitute.html. For more information, contact Mike Ballard at (859) 622-1029 or Michael.ballard@eku.edu, or Don Calitri at Donald.calitri@eku.edu or (859) 622-1147.

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

Kentucky Teacher

APRIL 2003

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Photo by Rick McComb

When Pigs Fly!

In Jordan Stidham's hands, pigs fly through the air with the greatest of ease. Jordan, a preschooler at Rodburn Elementary School in Rowan County, was having fun while improving hand-eye coordination. For a virtual visit to the ideal preschool classroom, see Page 6.